

ALEXEI STANCHINSKY

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There is madness and mental illness in some composers such as Robert Schumann, Hans Rott and Scriabin. Schubert and Hugo Wolf went mad suffering from syphilis. But there is no sadder case than the Russian Alexei Vladimirovich Stanchinsky, a handsome young man with talent and admired by such people as Prokofiev.

Stanchinsky was born on 8 March 1888 at Obolsunovo and was a student at Moscow University where one of his teachers was Sergei Taneyev. He had an outstanding but suffering from serious mental problems and was often a patient in psychiatric clinics. He had fearsome hallucinations and tore up his work in violent rages. Friends helped his reconstruct these works.

Most of his surviving works are for the piano.

Some assert that his music was influenced by Scriabin but this is not altogether so. Stanchinsky's music is uncluttered, open, clear and direct although the opening slow movement of the Sonata no 2 shows some influence of Scriabin weakness. His music may not appear experimental today but was considered so in his time.

The Twelve Studies are amazing often with original virtuosity and sometimes a strange beauty. The Prelude and Fugue in G minor is pensive and the Five Preludes of 1907 to 1912 are pensive and thoughtful but full of interest.

He drowned on 23 September 1914 near Logachevo, probably by his own hand.

His works are:

- Piano Sonata in E flat minor in one movement 1905
- Two Mazurkas for piano 1905
- Three Sketches for piano 1905-7
- Nocturne for piano 1907
- 3 Preludes for piano 1907
- Etude for piano 1907
- Piano Trio 1907-10
- Three Preludes for piano 1907-10
- Five Preludes for piano 1907-12
- Prelude for piano 1908
- Two songs to texts by Robert Burns 1907-1910
- Prelude in E flat for piano 1908
- Canon in B minor for piano 1908
- Prelude and Fugue in G minor for piano 1909
- Twelve Sketches for piano Op 1 1911
- Variations in A minor for piano 1911
- Piano Sonata no 1 in F 1911-12
- Allegro for piano Op 2 1912
- Piano Sonata no 2 in G 1912



Five Preludes in the form of canons 1913-14
Prelude in G flat 1913-14
String Trio (first performed 1966)
Sextet

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